



What happened?

- Between 1960 and 1990, Washington added 1,813,000 new residents, an increase of 41 percent. By the late 1980s, Washington State's quality of life was threatened by traffic congestion, the loss of open space and farmland, and the rapid spread of suburbs.
- Speaker of the House of Representatives Joe King and six committee chairs led an effort to craft a growth management law to fit the state. After fiery legislative debate, Governor Booth Gardner signed the Growth Management Act (GMA), SHB 2929 in July 1990.
- In 1991, the second part of the GMA, ReESHB 1025, spelling out how the law would be carried out, was signed.
- Under Washington's unique GMA law, the state requires that communities work together to wisely manage future growth while they protect the most sensitive lands.
- Twenty-nine of Washington's 39 counties now must adopt and carry out GMA comprehensive plans.

Creating Livable Communities

Managing Washington's Growth for 15 Years

An Overview



For more information or a copy of the report, contact Growth Management Services at 360-725-3000 or see www.cted.wa.gov/growth



**Washington State
Department of Community,
Trade and Economic Development**

PO Box 42525
Olympia, Washington 98504-2525
www.cted.wa.gov/growth



**Washington State
Department of Community,
Trade and Economic Development**



Twenty people who envisioned, debated, and ultimately created Washington's Growth Management Act 15 years ago recently shared "inside" stories to mark this anniversary. The act requires that communities work together on planning for future growth.

The state's Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) interviewed these leaders who inspired the act's creation. They also asked others how growth management is working in communities statewide. The interviews outline the state's successes and struggles in a new report called *Creating Livable Communities: Managing Washington's Growth for 15 Years*. The full report can be reviewed by visiting: www.cted.wa.gov/growth.

"Everybody was interested in doing something about growth management because they wanted to stop the tidal wave that was coming in – and that included people in the Legislature, environmentalists and the business community... and it included party officials, a whole variety of people."

— GOVERNOR BOOTH GARDNER

“Seeing the financial commitment [by cities and counties], the private sector comes to the table and provides forms of development that some communities have not seen in decades, if ever. And it’s fascinating to observe this happening in so many places, from Bellingham to Burien, from Walla Walla to Washougal.”

— MARK HINSHAW, FAIA, FAICP, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN, LMN ARCHITECTS

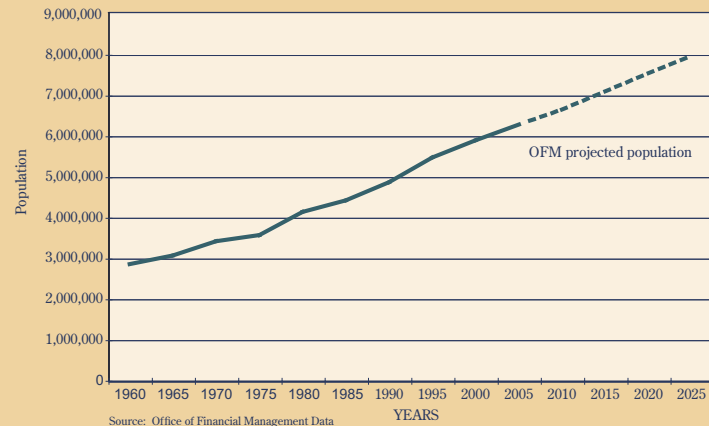
The state’s role

CTED helps local governments address both statewide and local interests in planning for the future of their communities. Since 1990, CTED has distributed about \$58.2 million to local governments for GMA planning. Three regional growth management hearings boards hear petitions on compliance and on possible population projection adjustments.

In 2002 Washington was one of six states singled out by the American Planning Association for creating and carrying out the “best and most comprehensive planning laws in the nation.”

Although many challenges remain, growth management is an important part of community living in Washington. It affects every Washington citizen’s quality of life.

Washington State Population Growth, 1960-2025



The success and benefits of growth management across Washington State

Compact Urban Development

Kirkland is creating compact, mixed-use urban activity centers with extensive pedestrian and transit-oriented amenities. “The act gave us the opportunity to consciously shape our community to create an attractive, vibrant, and inviting place to live, work, play, and visit,” said Mary-Alyce Burleigh, Kirkland councilmember and former mayor.

Capital Facilities

The GMA gives Kennewick planners help translating visions into policies and ways to carry out the policy. Although the city has a dedicated source of infrastructure funding and a system of public improvements, it didn’t have a successful history of integrating long-range planning with its public improvements system before the GMA, said Rick White, Kennewick planning director.

Historic Preservation

The GMA’s historic preservation goal provided policy support for the city to develop its first comprehensive plan Cultural and History Element. “This element has served as the foundation for recent regulatory and rezoning reform, greatly improving the protection of historic properties in Tacoma,” said Reuben McKnight, historic preservation officer, City of Tacoma.

Environmental Quality

Mill Creek is creating compact, mixed-use developments in the city core rather than expanding outward. “The GMA goals to reduce sprawl and encourage compact developments where services can be economically provided and the provision for planned actions has made a notable contribution to the city’s economic development program and the creation of a strong sense of community,” said Bill Trimm, AICP, planning director, City of Mill Creek. Planned actions allow for up-front environmental review for an area that reduces these costs to developers for individual projects.



Economic Development

Pierce County decision makers now work together to stop sprawl in rural areas. “Fifteen years after the GMA went into effect, developers and environmentalists, cities and counties, and regional agencies and local government have stopped bickering and are involved in beneficial, productive discussions,” said Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

As Issaquah grows, the city is working with developers to conserve open space, the third largest amount in King County. This would not have been possible without the opportunity the GMA provided to create a permanent legacy, said Mayor Ava Frisinger.

Citizen Participation

Bainbridge Island uses planning surveys to understand residents’ vision for the future. “The citizens of Bainbridge Island are fortunate to have the GMA as a primary tool to assist them in defining the future livability of their island,” said Larry K. Frazier, AICP, Bainbridge Island director of Planning and Community Development.

Regional Planning

A commercial investor who built Redmond Town Center said he wouldn’t have tried the experimental concept without growth management. “He relied on the regional plan indicating there wouldn’t be another large retail area springing up in the rural areas east of the city,” said Roberta Lewandowski, former planning director, City of Redmond.

Natural Resource Lands

GMA planning offers the tools local officials need in Franklin County to effectively designate agricultural lands. A result of a recent growth plan update was the designation of 62,000 additional acres of agricultural land, said Frank H. Brock, Neva J. Corkrum, and Robert E. Koch, Franklin County commissioners.